

Athenian News :

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Dunton's Oracle.

From Saturday June the 10th, to Tuesday June the 13th, 1710.

Mr. DUNTON,

MY self, and several other unmarried Ladies, have read your Wedding-Post, or Conjugal Lottery, with great Satisfaction and Pleasure, and resolve to take out several tickets; and joining the Prize Ladies are from 20000 l. to 500 l. we don't doubt but the Bachelors will be as forward to subscribe as the Ladies, in Hopes to get rich Wives; but, Mr. Dunton, tho' the unmarried Ladies and Bachelors are extremely oblig'd to you for your Wedding-Post, or Conjugal Lottery, yet I find some conscientious Ladies are against subscribing, as fearing (tho' your Conjugal Lottery will secure 'em against the Scandal of dying old Maids) that it may be the Occasion of unequal Matches: If in your next Oracle you can remove this Difficulty, I'll engage your Wedding-Lottery will be fill'd in a few Weeks. — I have only to add, the young Ladies and Bachelors are very impatient for some more of your Love-Posts, by the Publication whereof you will greatly oblige Ariadne, who constantly reads your Oracle, and will ever be

Your very humble Servant.

MADAM,

It is morally impossible this Conjugal Lottery should be the Occasion of unequal Matches: For,

First, There can be no great Inequality in Age, because none shall be admitted to this Adventure, but those that are aged between Twenty and Thirty; nor of Fortunes, because none will venture here that can't raise One Hundred Pound; nor of Humour, for all here are desirous of entering into the same State, and will all be in a good Humour at the Time of drawing, however they may prove afterwards. Besides, Humour is very fluid and alterable, and may as well be fitted after Matrimony as before it; and for the most Part, a great deal better. At least, each Man and Woman must stand to their Fortune. If any blunder upon Horns or a Scold, it is no more than he might have done, if the Stars would have it so, notwithstanding his utmost Precaution.

Madam, — As to your Request of more Love-Posts, you may expect to find in Dunton's Oracle, (as Opportunity offers) all the Billets doux, tender Letters, Love Cases, and merry Intrigues, that were sent to the Athenian Society

for the Ten Years the Athenian Mercury was continu'd; but having great Variety of nice and curious Questions that were lately sent from Oxford, York, Exeter, and other Parts, 'tis necessary they should be first answer'd; and (Madam) after that I shall often present you with a Love-Post, for that I am

Your most obliged humble Servant,

J. DUNTON.

The Dipping-Post, or a Lincubration upon Tunbridge-Wells; with a Word of Advice to the Water-drinkers.

Altho' my main Scope in this Dipping-Post be to treat of Tunbridge-water, yet will it not be altogether fruitless, or unpleasant, I hope, to the Reader, if I say something, as it were by Way of Preface, touching Water in general. Water is a Substance so absolutely necessary, that no living Creature can subsist without the Benefit of it, nor no Tree bring forth its Leaves and Fruit, nor any Plant its Seed, if they be depriv'd of that vivifical Moisture, which makes them all to grow and prosper. That this is true, you may observe it in Summer, for if Rain be wanting but a few Weeks, how backward are all things? How do all Plants wither in that Season, when they should chiefly flourish? For this Cause, perhaps it was, that *Hesiod* thought Water to be the most antient of all the Elements. Of this Opinion also was *Pythagoras*, one of the Seven wise Grecians, who made Water the sole Principal of all Things. *Empedocles* likewise jumping with them, said that all Things were made of Water; and *Hippocritus* in *Aristotle* terms the Soul Water. *Hippocrates* goeth not so far; but yet he calleth Water and Fire the Two Principals of Life. True it is, that by Water *Hippocritus* doth understand our Seed, and *Hippocrates* our radical Moisture. The *Latins*, upon the Etymology of the Word *Aqua*, Water, do derive it from *aqua*, quasi *aqua vivimus*, vel *aqua omnia fiunt*, by which we live, or out of which all Things are made. Others will have it quasi *aqua*, because there is nothing more equal and smooth than Water, when it is not toss'd with the Wind.

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Wind. But *Julius Caesar Scaliger* disliketh these Etymologies, and will derive *Aqua* from the obsolete Greek Word, *Αχχ*, which antiently did signify Water. This Element seems to challenge a Kind of Rule and Dominion over the rest, for it easily transmuteth Air into itself, extinguisheth Fire, and devoureth Earth. And to no higher than our Grandfather's Memory, nor farther than our Neighbours, the Ocean Sea swallow'd up above One Hundred Thousand Acres of Ground at one Clap in *Holland*. Nay, it aspires even unto the Heavens, and which is strange, it doth not only get up thither in it self alone, but carrieth with it whole Shoals of Fishes, Heaps of Stones, and divers other heavy Substances, which afterwards fall down with it. Most Creatures live without Fire, without Water none; and with Water only, without any other Sustenance, a Spanish Maiden is reported to have liv'd a long Time; and *Albertus* writeth of a melancholy Man, who for the Space of Seven Weeks liv'd on Water only, one Draught of which he took but every other Day. The Lord *Verulam* also hath produc'd his Opinion of late, and holdeth that Trees and Plants live and are nourish'd meerly by Water, and that the Earth is as it were, but a *Stabilimentum* unto them, to keep them steady, and from being beaten down by the Wind. He proveth it by Rose-bushes, which being put into Water, without any Earth, and kept upright in the same, not only brought forth Leaves, but fair Roses also: And the Royal Prophet saith, that a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, bringeth forth his Fruit in due Season. Much more might be said concerning Water, but because I intend to be brief let this suffice: But (as 'tis a Subject never handled) I'll discourse a little of the Difference of Water.

As for the Springs which are actually cold, there are sundry Differences of them, according to the several Substances they run through, and the Nature and Effects of some of them are very admirable. Some do turn into Stone whatsoever is cast into them, especially if the Things cast in be of a loose and porous Substance, as Leather, Balls, Gloves, and such like; and *Pliny* and others describe divers Springs of that Nature.

But not to go out of this Island for Examples, there is a Spring of that Nature in *Wales*, in a Piece of Ground formerly belonging to *Sir Thomas Middleton*. And the quick Activity of some of those Springs is wonderful, and almost incredible; for *Bodinus* doth affirm, that he hath seen Sticks of Wood, Straws, and such like small Things converted into Stone within the Space of Two or Three Hours. So that *Pliny's* Assertion, who saith, that Earth is turn'd into Stone in a Fountain of *Gnidus* within the Space of Eight Months, is no more to be wonder'd at. The same Author, namely *Pliny*, makes Mention of Two Fountains, the one call'd *Cerone*, which maketh the Sheep that drink of it, to bear black Wool, and the other *Melan*, which makes the Wool of the Sheep which drink of it white, and if they drink of both, their Wool will become of Two Colours; and of another call'd *Crathis*, which procureth Whiteness, and of a Fourth call'd *Sibaris*, which causeth Blackness in the Sheep and Oxen which drink of the same. Nay, the same Effect is seen also in Men, which drink of 'em, for those that drink of *Sibaris* become blacker, harder, and of a curl'd Hair, and such as drink of *Crathis*, wax whiter, softer, and of a smooth Hair. He bringeth in also other Waters, which have the like Effect in changing

the Colour of such as use them. He saith likewise, that there are Two Springs in *Bzoria*, near the River of *Orchomenus*, whereof the one strengtheneth the Memory, and the other causes Oblivion. A Fountain in *Arcadia* call'd *Linus*, preserves Conception and hindreth Abortion; and on the other Side, the River call'd *Amphrysus* makes Women barren. *Cydus*, a River of *Cilicia*, helps the Gout in the Feet, as appears by the Epistle of *Cassius Parmensis* to *Marcus Antonius*; and contrariwise by the Use of the Water which is in *Trazene*, all Men get the Gout in their Feet. All such as drink of a Lake call'd *Clitorius*, begin thereby to hate Wine. *Polycletus* relateth, that the Water of a Fountain in *Cilicia* serves instead of Oil. *Juba* speaks of a Lake among the *Troglo-dites*, which for the Hurt it doth, is call'd the mad Lake, and saith that it is bitter and salt thrice in a Day, and then fresh, and so again at Night. The same Author also makes Mention of a Spring in *Arabia* which bubbles up with such Force, that it casteth forth whatsoever is thrown into it, tho' it be never so weighty. There are Two Fountains in *Phrygia*, the one call'd *Cleon*, and the other *Gelon*, having those Greek Names from their Effects; for the first makes Men cry, and the second makes 'em laugh. There is a hot Spring at *Cranon*, and yet without excessive Heat, which being mingl'd with Wine, and kept in a Vessel, keeps the same hot for the Space of Three Days. There is a River in *Bithynia* call'd *Olachas*, into which if perjur'd Persons be thrown, they feel as much Heat as if they were in a flaming Fire. In *Cantabria* there are Three Springs but Eight Foot asunder, which running together make a goodly River, and every one of 'em by Turns become dry Twelve Times, and sometimes Twenty Times in a Day, so that a Man would think there were no more Water in it, whilst in the mean Time his next Neighbour's are full, and flow continually. There is a Brook in *Judea* which is dry'd up every Sabbath. In *Macedonia*, not far from the Sepulchre of *Euripides*, there are Two Brooks running together, the one having very wholesome Water, and the other poisonous and deadly.

If any Man think that some of these Things are pass'd Belief, let him learn that there are no greater Miracles in any other Part of Nature, than in Waters. I pass now to Mineral and Medicinal Springs, which use to be drank for the Stone, Cholick, and other Distempers.

Mineral Waters, by their manifold Turnings and Windings under the Ground, are as it were impregnated with divers Virtues and Faculties of the several Minerals, thro' which they run, and draw with them either the Faculties, or Substance of the same, and sometimes both. And therefore as meer Pureness commendeth ordinary Springs and Wells, so doth the various Mixture of several Things, tho' sometimes of a contrary and repugnant Nature, procure Commendation to Medicinal Waters. Out of all these subterraneous Substances divers Springs draw sometimes contrary Faculties, or at least such as have but small Affinity one with another, and from hence it happens that oftentimes one and the same Medicinal Spring cures divers Diseases, which are either contrary one to another, or at least have but small Affinity together. It is of this as it is of *Iberiake* or *Mitridate*, which are Compositions consisting of a great Number of Simples of contrary and repugnant Natures, as it were huddled together by Chance; and yet when those Compositions have had their due Fermentation, and

and that those several Simples have wrought one upon another, and become to be incorporated together, there resulteth afterwards an universal Form in the Composition, which makes it excellent for most Diseases, and as it were a general *Pampharmacon*. And in that Regard some do merrily call *Mithridate* the Father, and *Treacle* the Mother of all Medicines. But it's now Time we should go to *Tunbridge Water*.

These *Tunbridge Wells* (which we may fitly stile our *English Spaw*) bubble up in a Valley surrounded with *Soney Hills*, that are render'd remarkable by divers Rocks, which standing above Ground, carry some Resemblance with the wonderful *Stone-hinge*. The Common they are scituate on is naturally so barren, as if 'twas design'd for the Habitation of *Famine*: But this Sterility provident Nature hath sufficiently compensated by those Medicinal Waters, which Yearly attracting a vast Concourse of People, affords great Advantage to the Neighbouring Inhabitants. The Water of these Springs is somewhat bitter, or rather relishing of the Rust of those Iron Mines thro' which (as in a *Limbeck*) it hath been distill'd in its subterranean Passage; which renders it a little ungrateful to the coy Taste of such as come out of meer Wantonness to tipple there; but when it hath been familiariz'd by Use a while, it soon becomes less nauseous; and 'tis certain one can never be able to drink half so much of any other Liquor (tho' never so pleasant) as one may of this. I drink Nine Glasses every Morning, for (as *Taylor* says)

*'Tis Ale of Grandam Nature's Brewing,
And seldom sets her Guests a spewing.*

Its Operations are chiefly *diuretick*, and is therefore excellent against all Diseases caus'd by *Obstructions*, *Agues*, *Scurvey*, *Green Sickness*, &c. Strengthens the Nerves, and their Original, the Brain: Besides, they tell me it hath some good Influence on the *Alamode Disease*, (a *Pocky Tail*) and that some *London Sparks*, who have receiv'd signal Testimonies of their Mistresses Kindness, are come hither to wash them off; particularly *Monfieur B*— and a *Dutch Captain*.— In short, 'tis a universal Remedy, and is surrounded every Morning with a Crew of jolly Women they call *Dippers*, who in this healthy Country generally live to a great Age; but as *Flatman* says,

*In vain we take Montpelier's Chrystal Air,
In Hopes to leave the Thoughts of dying there.*

For, even *Mother Jeffries*, the antient merry, drunken *Water-dipper*, dy'd at last.

*Then let the Wells be with deep Mourning spread,
For Tatterdemallion * now is dead.
Her dipping Friends, and Sisters too, alack!
Shon'd dip their Glass, and all their Tails in Black.
They dip us Health, indeed, but 'twon't be long
E'er Death hath dip'd 'em ev'ry one.
These dipping Slaves, for Two Months in the Year,
Do cleanse our Water-pipes with Adam's Beer;
We talk of Healths, but only drink it here.*

* This Name *Mother Jeffries*, the antient *Water-dipper*, gave to all the *Water-dippers*, and (whether drunk or sober) would still call 'em *Tatterdemallions*.

*See here this dipping Crew of Mourners come
To pour their Grief on Mother Jeffry's Tomb?
They bowl in Black, but cannot hold it long,
For Joy still puts the closest Mourning on +.
See this in Gilbert, Weeks, and Turley too,
In Humphrey Moll— and all the dipping Crew,
Who mourn, and laugh, just as an Heir wou'd do.
They laugh to have her Place, and then they cry,
When they behold her ghastly Look and Eye;
Their very Trade's— a dipping Elegy.
But Mother Jeffry so in Fame excels,
Her Name will ever live at Tunbridge Wells,
Whilst there are Dippers, Nants, or drunken Tails.*

Having treated of the Nature and Virtue of *Tunbridge Water*, and given an Enumeration of the chief Diseases it is good for, I shall conclude this *Dipping-Post*, or *Lucubration* upon *Tunbridge Wells*, with *Dr. Nichols's* most excellent Advice to the *Water-drinkers*, as I find it in his Sermon entitl'd, *God's Blessing on the Use of Mineral Waters*.

" Since therefore (says the Doctor) we are met together in this celebrated Place, in Hopes to receive the Blessing of God upon us, in either restoring or confirming our Healths, let us take Care to maintain among our selves an easy and friendly Conversation: For since it is necessary for a just Operation of this gentle and natural Medicine, that the Patients do sequester themselves from Business and Study, and unbend their Minds, as much as may be, from severe Thought and eager Application; a great Part of the Day must be taken up in Conversation and Discourse, which we ought to endeavour to render as agreeable and entertaining as possibly we can to the Company we consort with; to the End, that by the Charms of an endearing Conversation we may sweeten the Fatigue of so long a Leisure, and by entertaining the Minds of each other with fresh Scenes of delightful Thoughts, we may make the Waters of the Place to have a more powerful Influence upon our Bodies. Therefore we must divest our selves of all Moroseness of Temper, and Sullenness of Behaviour; and if we be not naturally dispos'd to Mirth and Pleasantness, we should put a Force upon our Natures by a particular Application; we should give a new Spring to our Minds, and purposely lay out our Thoughts to speak Things taking and agreeable to our Friends; whether it be in the Way of Relation of delightful Matters of Fact, or by the harmless Reflections and sportive Sallies of a well-natur'd Wit.

" Now in Order to such a good humour'd and peaceable Conversation, we must take Care in the first Place to avoid all Party-disputes in our Discourse, which serve only to enflame and rancour Men's Spirits, and to soure Conversation: For, in this Place of general Resort, Men are as it were Citizens of the whole World; they belong to no particular Division or Party; or rather, they are all incorporated for the Season into one particular Family or Brotherhood; and therefore ought to live together with the like Love and Friendship.

" And

+ 'Tis well known that the richest Heir is the closest Mourner, when his Heart is as full of Joy as it can well hold.

“And in the next Place, To avoid all contumelious
 “Reflections upon the Company, whether it be by
 “Verbal affronts, or especially by defamatory Writings;
 “which Actions, as they do particularly disturb the
 “Happiness of such mix’d Societies, so in the wisest Na-
 “tions they have been look’d upon as the most scanda-
 “lous and base, and fit only for their Slaves and sordid
 “Wits. And I may speak it for the Honour of our Na-
 “tion, That of late Years, fewer Lampoons and scur-
 “rilous Libels have been wrote amongst us, and fewer
 “encourag’d than in most other Nations. Ingenious
 “Men are become truly sensible how sorry a Part of
 “Wit it is to scratch and tear; how unmanly and cow-
 “ardly it is to wound Persons by an unknown Hand,
 “in the Back, and in the dark; and to be guilty of an
 “Action which they are either ashamed or afraid to
 “own.”

Thus far Dr. Nicholls. I shall only add, if the judicious
 Reader find any just Fault with anything contain’d in this
Dipping Post, or Lucubration upon *Tunbridge Wells*, let
 him remember that *humanum est errare*, that to err is in-
 cident to the Faulty of our Human Nature: But I never
 was so wedded to my own Opinions, but that upon better
 Information, I ever was willing to acknowledge my Er-
 rors, if I committed any, without esteeming it any Shame
 so to do, no more than many good and worthy Authors
 have done when they publish’d their Retractions.

But if my own Experience may gain Credit, I must
 conclude this *Dipping-Post* with telling my Reader, I
 have been a Water drinker for Twenty Years, and have
 receiv’d more Good again the stone and Gravel by a
 Yearly Drinking of *Tunbridge Water*, than by all the Phy-
 sick I ever took, and do verily believe my Reverend Father,
 Mr. John Danton, had been living to this Day would he
 have drank *Tunbridge Waters*; and therefore tho’ some
 Persons perceive little or no Benefit at first by the same,
 yet let them not be discourag’d, but persevere in the Use
 of it. For some having been there once with small, or
 no Profit at all, the next Year after, upon a second Tri-
 al, have return’d home perfectly cur’d. It is the ordi-
 nary Reward of Constancy and Perseverance in the End
 to hit the Mark they aim at. Every thing in this World
 hath a certain Period, before which it can’t come to a full
 Perfection. And so (for this Year) adieu to *Tunbridge
 Wells* — Adieu to my Brother Water-drinkers —
 Adieu to Goody Gilbert, my old Dipper, and adieu to all
 her Dipping Sisters; but above all adieu, (a long Adieu)
 to old *Jeffries*, our Dipping Mother. — And seeing
 the merry Sport made by this drunken Crone was a sort
 of comick Potion to make the Waters pass, I’ll bestow
 upon her (at parting) this *Dipping Epitaph*.

Mother Jeffries Epitaph.

HERE Jeffries lies on Earthen Shelf,
 Who dip’d ’till she plung’d in her self.
 What Water-drinker now alive,
 If he has Bowels, would not sigh?
 Or on her Ashes Tears distill?
 If Men won’t weep, this Marble will.

Won’t weep? (Oh no!) won’t laugh I mean,
 For stranger Riddle ne’er was seen,
 She liv’d dead drunk to Ninety Nine.
 And now she lies here buried,
 For dying often in her Head,
 She’s drank her self in Earnest dead.
 She liv’d (I won’t say dy’d) in Spight,
 Her Head was heavy, Tail was light,
 She wept whene’er she laugh’d out-right.
 She com non Ways to Mirth did flee,
 Like Owls she pleas’d by Gravity;
 And yet so merry was withal,
 Her Life a Comedy we call,
 Which Death has dip’d for good and all.
 ’Tis Pity, for the Ladies Sake,
 For the round Courties* she did make
 Would split a Broomstick, Cancer break:
 And so di’rect was her Face,
 Her Looks wou’d make the Waters pass;
 Her Tail and Head was perfect Farce.
 But Mother Jeffries now is dead,
 And in this Grave is gone to Bed
 With drunken Ralph, her aged Sponse,
 And b e they keep — a sober House:
 For, being dip’d o’er Head and Ears,
 She neither brawls for Wine nor Beer.

This jesting Crone in Health wou’d say,
 The more I drink the more I may.
 Now Death hath prov’d her Saying just,
 She’s drank her self as dry as Dust.
 Yet here upon her Tomb doth stand
 A Bowl carv’d out by Artists Hand:
 ’Tis all her Grief, the Dippers think,
 That this large Bowl shou’d have no Drink.
 Wer’t fill’d with Nants, I do aver,
 She’d breath again, perhaps wou’d stir;
 ’Twas Want of Drams was Death to her.
 Her Death a Paradox wou’d be,
 It made — a Merry Elegy:
 And as it’s Grave she’s made to quaff,
 Brandy’s her merry Epitaph.
 But that is scarce a Prodigy,
 Her Tail and Head was always dry.
 Adieu! adieu! old merry Crone,
 For I shan’t give a tedious Hone:
 For tho’ we come to Tunbridge Wells
 To dip for Health, and nothing else,
 Yet ’twon’t be long, dear Jeffery,
 E’er we are dip’d as deep as thee.
 Then hush a while — and we’ll not fail
 To meet thee in thy quiet Cell.
 We follow thee with all the Speed
 The Stone can make, or Sickness breed.
 Each Minute is a short Degree,
 And ev’ry Hour a Step to thee.
 Hark! for our Pulse, like a soft Drum,
 Bea’s our Approach, tells thee we come;
 And slow howe’er our Marches be,
 We shall at last sit down by thee;
 All dip — into Eternity.

* Her Courties were circular, turning her self round.